
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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Disposal Tips for Household Generated Sharps

Household generated “sharps” include hypodermic needles and syringes, and lancets. They are typically used in the home for insulin injection or for administering other medications.

Household generated sharps should be disposed appropriately to help prevent injury and illness to family members and waste handlers and reduce pollution to the environment.



Environmental Management of Sharps

The Department of Environmental Services regulates the disposal of household generated sharps; refer to Env-Sw 904.01(b)(3). Household generated sharps may be disposed of in the solid waste, provided:

1. Sharps are enclosed inside rigid, puncture-resistant containers.
2. Containers encasing sharps are sealed and labeled “not for recycling.”

Certain containers found in the household, particularly plastic bleach and laundry detergent containers are satisfactory to ensure the safe disposal of sharps. Also, containers can be purchased that are specifically designed for the disposal of sharps. Before placing a container of sharps in the trash, reinforce the lid with heavy-duty tape and place the container in a securely fastened plastic bag.

Although placing household generated sharps in the regular trash is allowable under state rule, some municipalities prohibit this disposal method. Please check with the local authority to determine whether or not it is acceptable in your community. While it may be permissible, try to avoid the disposal of sharps in the regular trash if possible. Other disposal options are discussed elsewhere in this information sheet.

For further information on the infectious waste rules, as administered by the Department of Environmental Services, please contact the department’s Solid Waste Management Bureau at (603) 271-2925 or swcomp@des.nh.gov.

New Hampshire Syringe Access Initiative

The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, in partnership with New Hampshire hospitals sponsors an outreach program for safe disposal of syringes and participating hospitals accept properly contained syringes from the community.

The following medical facilities are participants in the initiative.

- Frisbie Memorial, Rochester (603) 332-5211
- Lakes Region General, Laconia (603) 524-3211
- Littleton Hospital, Littleton (603) 444-9323
- New London Hospital, New London (603) 526-5266
- Southern NH Medical Center, Nashua (603) 577-CALL
- St. Joseph Healthcare, Nashua (603) 882-3000
- Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital, Colebrook (603) 237-4971
- Weeks Medical Center, Lancaster (603) 788-4911

For further information on the Syringe Access Initiative, contact Denise Rondeau, DHHS, at (603) 271-0290 or drondeau@dhhs.state.nh.us.

The SHARPS Program: Store Household sharps and Return them Properly

In cooperation with the city of Nashua, Southern New Hampshire Medical Center and St. Joseph Hospital created the SHARPS Program. The program requires home users of syringes to place their sharps in a sealed sharps container, liquid laundry detergent bottle, or fabric softener bottle. These containers may be brought in for disposal during SHARPS Program hours.

- Southern New Hampshire Medical Center
HEALTHMATCH (800) 628-8070
- St. Joseph Hospital
MED-CALL (800) 210-9000

New Hampshire Department of Transportation Sharps Program

The DOT administers the sharps container program at the Hooksett and Hampton rest areas as part of the DOT's blood borne pathogen safety program. The program is designed to protect public health and state employees from the potential impact of blood borne pathogens. The containers are "one-way" disposal units and contain a spring-loaded "door" that allow material to be disposed of but not retrieved.

For further information on the DOT program, contact Al Barrington, Bureau of Turnpikes, at (603) 485-3806 or abarrington@dot.state.nh.us.

Container Mail Back Programs

Sharp containers are distributed to customers and, when full, are mailed back to a syringe disposal company for safe disposal. Sharp container collection programs are regulated under the United States Postal Service when syringes are mailed. The USPS regulations establish specific packaging, labeling, and tracking requirements for these syringes.

For further information on the proper shipping requirements, contact USPS, at (603) 644-3872.